

the Mystery of Haushofer

by EDMUND A. WALSH, S. J.

BEFORE HE COMMITTED SUICIDE, GERMANY'S MASTER GEOPOLITICIAN TOLD HIS SECRETS TO AN AMERICAN GEOGRAPHER-PRIEST. HERE FATHER EDMUND A. WALSH OF GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY REVEALS:

- ▶ How Haushofer gave Hitler a philosophy
- ▶ How he molded his favorite pupil, Rudolf Hess
- ▶ How he preached hate to protect his Jewish wife
- ▶ How his son was killed by the Gestapo
- ▶ How he recanted his teachings
- ▶ How he and his wife killed themselves



IT was on Sept. 25, 1945 that I first came face to face with Karl Haushofer in the cozy study of his mountain home, Hartschimmelhof, overlooking Ammer See in southern Bavaria. The meeting on that secluded but enchanting hillside above the lake where no devastation of war was visible initiated the final stage in an extraordinary chain of events which stretched back to 1924 and was destined to terminate in the tragedy of a double suicide on March 10, 1946.

For something more than 20 years the voluminous writings and manifold activities of this German general, who late in life became a geographer on the faculty of the University of Munich, had engaged my attention. The exotic title of Haushofer's specialty, geopolitics, and the nebulosity of his vocabulary had resulted in a mixed reception of his work by American scholars. He was discounted by many and dismissed by some as simply another obscure writer from Germany who exemplified the Teutonic passion for obscuring the obvious with unintelligible terminology. But by others he was considered a subtle and dangerous influence in the evolving challenge of National Socialism, a close collaborator with Rudolf Hess, deputy führer, and the master genius of an organized movement designed to justify, by scientific argument, the Nazi gamble for total power.

Haushofer's contribution to the Nazi revolution was considerable and may be divided into two categories: his academic teachings and his political activities. His theories and writings were undoubtedly vague and often almost unintelligible. One stared in awe at ponderous expressions in his *Journal of Geopolitics* and marveled at his travail in clothing simple geography with political mysticism. But beneath the mass of verbiage contained in his 40 published volumes and the 400 essays, articles, lectures and reviews reposed a provocative theory of territorial expansion which, in essence, was simply an apology for international theft, prepared in advance of the event. For 20 years the people of Germany were fanaticized by the sacred words *Lebensraum* and "autarchy;" their imagination was fired by visions of Germany being transformed into an immense continental power and rendered impregnable against the seapower of England; their cupidity was whetted by the promise of panregionalism in Central Europe, with Germany the central fortress of political and economic influence, and their hatred of Versailles was fanned by demands for a rectification of frontiers based on involved arguments from anthropology, ethnology and frequent invocation of Nietzsche's superman. The geopolitical symphony, however

varied in theme and tempo, had one basic leitmotiv: space is not only the vehicle of power. . . . It is power. . . . The disintegration of every state and every culture begins with degeneration of the space concept. . . .

Through Haushofer's pupil, Rudolf Hess, a vengeful philosophy of power and a technique for achieving it were communicated to Hitler and other leading Nazis, who avidly seized on the windfall and capitalized ruthlessly on the half-truths popularized in the name of objective science. The venerable scholar thus became not only an elder statesman in the field of geographical strategy but developed into a companion and political Nestor of the ruling clique. He became president of the German Academy and president, likewise, of the Peoples' League for Germanism Abroad. He delivered regular political broadcasts over Radio Munich. He testified under oath that he had been consulted on Japanese affairs by von Ribbentrop and was frequently summoned to the Foreign Office in Berlin for that purpose. His residence on Kolbergerstrasse in Munich was the rendezvous for conferences between Nazi leaders and Japanese statesmen during the courtship of Nippon by Nazi Germany.

After the outbreak of World War II the interrelation of cause and effect became evident as one invasion after another followed the pattern so long and so openly expounded by the master geopolitician. Haushofer's name consequently was included in the list of security suspects, and orders were issued to take him into custody with a view to ascertaining if he should be brought to trial with the other major conspirators at Nürnberg.

When I set out for Haushofer's home in the hills around Ammer See, Major McDowell of the provost marshal's office in Munich insisted that two armed guards should accompany me. At that time, in September 1945, it was thought that remnants of a Nazi underground might still be encountered in these remote foothills of the Bavarian Alps.

I found Haushofer seated at a writing desk in his study, engaged on some new composition. He rose to the full height of his imposing stature and fixed his searching eyes intently on mine. Despite his 76 years his bearing was still military and his carriage stiffly upright. The head was angular, the chin aggressive, the mustache clipped and the nose Roman to a marked degree. With a formal courtesy he bade me be seated and the conversation began. On learning of the decision of Justice Jackson, the U.S. chief of counsel, to require his presence at Nürnberg, he manifested immediate concern. He explained that he had already been interrogated, not only at Gen-

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The Very Rev. Edmund A. Walsh is vice president of Georgetown University as well as founder and regent of its School of Foreign Service. A noted geopolitician, Father Walsh has studied the writings of Haushofer for more than 20 years and was especially qualified to investigate Haushofer's record. He returned from his latest assignment three months after Haushofer committed suicide.



HAUSHOFER CONTINUED

eral Eisenhower's headquarters but also locally by officers of the Third Army, and had been released, chiefly because of his failing health. He then added. "The previous interrogations were conducted by young officers, chiefly combat personnel, who handled me decently and with consideration of my 76 years. But obviously they were not specialists in geopolitics. Why could not your government send some experienced American such as Isaiah Bowman [a leading geographer, now president of Johns Hopkins University] or Owen Lattimore [an expert on the Far East]? Then, too, there is a priest in a university at Washington who has written much against me and whose writings I have collected. Any one of these men would understand what I meant and what I endeavored to achieve by my geopolitics."

He did not know until a much later date that he was speaking to one on his list of endorsed interrogators.

Haushofer asked if he might consult his wife, who happened to be absent in Munich, before being taken to Nürnberg. "I have been happily married for nearly 50 years," he explained. "She has been not only a faithful wife but a constant and extremely intelligent collaborator in all my scientific work and I do nothing without her counsel." His request was granted and eventually Haushofer, voluntarily and alone, returned with me to Nürnberg.

But an incident occurred on Oct. 4 which caused a radical change in our program. While attending the examination of another witness at the Palace of Justice, I was handed a message: "Haushofer has just suffered a heart attack at his lodgings. An Army doctor is now with him. You had better get out to him immediately." He was conscious when I arrived. But the doctor took me aside and cautioned me, "He has a bad heart condition and he will die in one of these seizures. No one can predict how soon or how serious the next one will be."

This information was conveyed within the hour to Justice Jackson. It was decided that instead of indicting Haushofer and bringing him to trial, as had been originally planned, Colonel Brundage of the judge advocate general's office and I should interrogate him rather informally.

"My little institute"

THE first of these interviews took place on Oct. 5, 1945 in the living room of Haushofer's lodgings, under circumstances designed to lessen the nervous tension. A court stenographer and an official interpreter were present. Ranged around a table, we began what might have been a seminar in an American university. Haushofer's published works were stacked in piles for ready reference; marked copies of his *Journal of Geopolitics* were available and the balance of that publication, which he had edited for 20 years, was at hand in a microfilmed version. When he saw the array of exhibits, he expressed surprise and inquired if they had been gathered in Germany.

"No," was the reply, "we have all your works in the U.S. These copies have come with me by airplane from Washington."

"Ach!" he rejoined, "and then they complained of my little, so-called Institute of Geopolitics at Munich!"

The inquiry, which was begun by Colonel Brundage and continued by me, dealt with the facts of Haushofer's career, his teaching and lecturing activities, his association with Hitler and particularly his intimacy with Rudolf Hess. Haushofer recounted the student days of Hess, his attendance at Haushofer's lectures, his imprisonment with Hitler at Landsberg after the abortive Munich Putsch of 1923 and Haushofer's visit to them while they were both in confinement. Among the books he brought to Hitler and Hess were Ratzel's *Political Geography* and Clausewitz's treatise, *On*

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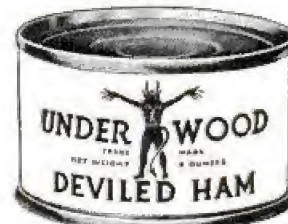
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War. Haushofer's testimony included Hess's final rise to power as deputy of the Führer and finally Hess's secret flight to England. Haushofer disclaimed all knowledge of that mysterious incident, although British authorities found in Hess's pockets a visiting card of Karl Haushofer and another of Albrecht, Haushofer's eldest son.

Haushofer protested to the interrogator that he had attempted to instill sound geographical and political ideas in the mind of his favorite pupil. "But," he protested, "the party used to tear him away from me. He was a very attentive student, but his strong side was not intelligence, rather heart and character."

As for Hitler, Haushofer described him as a half-educated person who never correctly understood the principles of geopolitics transmitted to him by Hess. The Führer, he explained, was intolerant of opposition. If one disagreed with him "he would turn his eyes toward some distant point and change the subject." Ribbentrop, he asserted, was the influence mainly responsible for the distortion of true geopolitics in Hitler's mind. "I even had to teach him how to read a map." At one point Haushofer stoutly maintained that it was the worldwide extent of the British Empire which motivated much of his writing, and that he was campaigning against "the bad things the white man has committed in East Asia . . . crimes against his own culture."

When I suggested that in his writings he also fanned ill will against other countries in addition to England, he professed surprise. Thereupon he was handed an article over his own signature in his magazine, *Journal of Geopolitics*, February 1939. The result was nearly catastrophic. The record kept by the court reporter describes the sequel:

"At this point, Dr. Walsh showed the witness a copy of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* in which an article appeared by Haushofer containing much abuse of the U.S. as ruled by 'Jewish plutocrats' and 'space-devouring imperialists.' On reading it, Haushofer broke down emotionally. Tears came into his eyes, and he could barely speak. As he had suffered a heart attack yesterday which needed medical attention and, as it could easily happen again under these conditions, Dr. Walsh terminated the session."

When the interpreter and the court stenographer had departed, I had coffee brought in and offered Haushofer a cigar. Slowly he relaxed and returned to normal. The crimson flush which had suffused his cheeks faded and his lips ceased trembling. I felt it my duty to say, "We are now alone and I am obliged to state that you have dishonored the name and the credit of a university professor by thus lending the high position you occupied in Germany to the purposes of Hitler's worst propaganda. How could you spread such inflammatory charges against the U.S. which at that time had no ill will against Germany?"

"I have lived under perpetual fear"

HIS answer reveals, in great part, though not entirely, the tragedy of Karl Haushofer: "I never should have written such things. You must remember that I came late to the academic profession, having been a military man, and I brought something of the military mentality with me. I did not have the objectivity which you have and I deeply regret having written that passage. . . . If I were younger, I would ask you to take me by airplane to the U.S. and let me stand before your professors and learned societies in order to tell them what I really hoped to achieve by geopolitics. Much of what I said was written under compulsion."

"For 50 years, I have been happily married to a non-Aryan, and she has been my faithful and intelligent co-worker. Since Hess—who protected us—left for England, I have lived under the perpetual fear that she would be whisked away to Theresienstadt [a concentration camp for Jews] or Auschwitz [an extermination camp]. I have lived under the sword of Damocles for the last seven years."

Here he took his spectacles and swung them back and forth over his head. It was evening and the room was in a half dusk. Across the table came a recital that was punctuated by great emotion and interrupted by frequent use of his handkerchief.

"The Gestapo murdered my son, Albrecht Haushofer, in 1945 because he tried to end this disastrous war by secret negotiations through Switzerland. . . . I myself was arrested in 1944 and sent to Dachau for four months; likewise, my younger son Heinz for eight months. . . . My sister-in-law and my oldest grandson, 15 years old, were locked up for two and a half months. . . . This persecution ended only with the American invasion of Bavaria."

I readily agreed to these statements of fact. But I insisted that his cooperation before 1944, his voluntary assistance, the influence of his university position and particularly his widely distrib-

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HAUSHOFER CONTINUED

uted booklet in praise of Hitler's movement, *The National Socialist Idea in the World* (1933), had all been of great political value to Hitler and his associates. Haushofer protested that the Nazis had corrupted and distorted his teachings. I replied that nowhere had I read that he had protested against or repudiated Nazi policies but on the contrary had endorsed them in printed works and public utterances.

We broke off until the following day, when I asked him to answer that last question which had caused him so much emotional agitation.

Haushofer began the next session by stating, "I have to say now that these considerations had been inspired too much by passion—that is, after reading many attacks in the English and American press. But I want to say now that, had I spent all my life as a scientist, I would not have written them the way I did."

Asked if such a recantation would apply to other conclusions of his and if they, too, should not be modified in the light of more serious reflection, his answer was, "Right now, I would neither write such things nor would I represent any such thoughts." QUESTION: In your book *Grenzen*, published for the second time in 1939, you quoted with approval, did you not, the famous dictum of Spinoza, "Everyone has as much right in the world as his power enables him to have?"

ANSWER: The power I meant there was not military power. A distinction has to be made in the meaning of the Latin word *potentia* which was used.

QUESTION: But in the context in which you expressed this approbation, I believe the whole question at that moment was physical power.

ANSWER: This I cannot remember exactly. You see, I have the poor memory belonging to an old man.



AS MAJOR GENERAL in the last war, Haushofer poses with Jewish wife and two sons, Albrecht (right), Heinz. Hitler made them "honorary Aryans."

For two solid hours the debate continued, Haushofer evading or mitigating the charges, the interrogator citing documents by chapter and verse.

"You can see," he said at one time, "from my actions since 1938 that I was against any forcible measures. . . . My opposition to that is proved by the persecution I was subjected to from that date onward."

QUESTION: Therefore, you suggest to us . . . that if anything did appear which seemed to justify the aggressive warfare of Hitler, it was under duress?

ANSWER: It was. Because I always had over me, for all I wrote, four different censorships. . . .

QUESTION: . . . Would you, therefore, wish us to understand

that the sword of Damocles is also the explanation of chapter G in your *Wehrgeopolitik* (*War Geopolitics*) which I have before me here? . . . It seems to me that it is an apologia for the tactics which the German army was using to gain its objectives; and this . . . was published in 1941.

In his *Foreword* to this new and latest edition, Haushofer had written: "When the first edition of *War Geopolitics* appeared it was only as a challenge before a closed gate. The second edition was published on the threshold of fulfillment. This third enlarged edition appears at the time of the crowning consummation of the Greater German Reich's dazzling ascent by war geopolitical steps after a hundred years of the importance felt for the preservation and extension of its living space. War geopolitics is now more necessary than ever for the German Reich."

ANSWER: I must admit . . . that ever since 1938 I wanted to be able to resign from public life but I was never allowed to do so.

QUESTION: . . . I should also like to know whether my interpretation . . . of this chapter is correct.

ANSWER: Your views regarding this chapter, I unfortunately have to say, are quite correct. At that time, I really had the intention to end my life, but I have to say that because of my wife and my five children which she brought into the world and the threat which was over her to be sent to Theresienstadt, I could not follow such a course.

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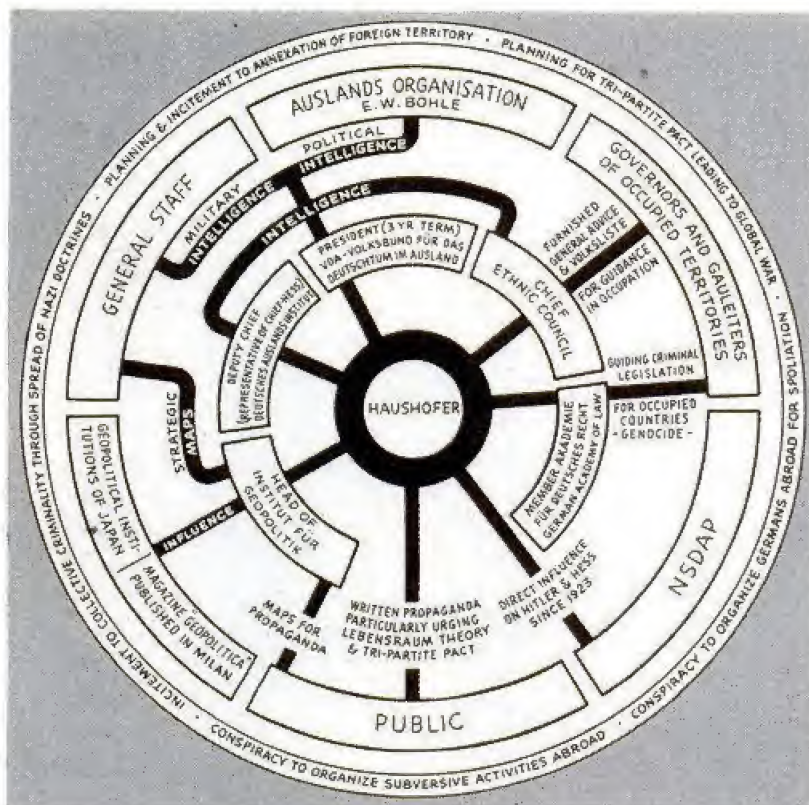
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HAUSHOFER'S INFLUENCE on Nazi policy was diagrammed for Allied War Crimes Commission in this chart. Actually he was never brought to trial.

HAUSHOFER CONTINUED

QUESTION: But I chiefly want to assure myself that I have not misread or misunderstood.

ANSWER: No, you are quite right. It is very hard to say this.

Haushofer, I knew, had had a special lifelong interest in Japan, where he spent two years of duty as military observer in his earlier life. In 1924 he had publicly hoped that the Far East, particularly Japan, would "become a punishing influence to be felt by our own merciless economic and political enemies and oppressors." The grand alliance between Japan and Germany was one of the cardinal points of his teaching. To Haushofer, consequently, had been entrusted the confidential spadework of preparing the ground for the tripartite alliance, Germany-Italy-Japan.

I raised the question whether his influence and teachings may have stimulated the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. His reply was that the Axis agreement and what happened under it was an evolution in a wrong direction, contrary to his principles of cultural and slow evolutionary solutions.

Finally I said, "I believe that you are in a position now... to do a great service to a long-suffering humanity. During whatever years Divine Providence may leave to you, you have the time to correct for coming generations many of the false conclusions that people came to from reading your work of almost a lifetime." In response to this Haushofer agreed to prepare a statement giving the "correct" interpretation of his teachings.

At the end of this second official interrogation, I informed him that he could return at once to his home and wife. As a result of this information, I almost had another collapsed man on my hands. He arose and stood rigid, an old soldier at attention. It was another shattering moment in the shattered world of Haushofer. Outside, the once resplendent city of Nürnberg, that unique repository of German history and Germanic culture, lay in ruins. Inside, this broken man of 76, a proud general and a noted scholar, whose ancestry derived from an ancient, landed family of Bavaria and who recently had walked with the lords and kings of the earth, stood physically upright—and straight as an arrow—but ruined spiritually in everything he had sought to accomplish over a space of 50 years. With difficulty he enforced the discipline of his sex and his caste to hold back the tears.

Haushofer's encounter with Hess

NEXT day Colonel Amen, chief of the interrogation division, informed me that I should hold Haushofer for a special purpose. Rudolf Hess had just arrived at Nürnberg, having been handed over by the British authorities. It was desirable, Colonel Amen explained, that Haushofer should confront Hess unexpectedly in order to test the sincerity of Hess's alleged amnesia. The fact that they had been intimate friends as master and pupil for 25 years

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gave rise to the hope that this confrontation might throw valuable light on Hess's mental condition.

The meeting took place in an interrogation room at the courthouse on Oct. 9 at 2:30 p.m. It was not without drama and high tension. By arrangement with Colonel Amen, I escorted Haushofer into the room where Hess was already seated under guard. When Haushofer first saw Hess, he was astounded at his physical appearance and gaunt countenance. "Mein Gott!" he whispered in shocked amazement. He then looked Hess intently in the eye, grasped his hand and tried to break through the barrier of nonrecognition, but to no avail. The same performance was repeated in another room, with fewer persons present but with the same negative result. Every attempt to recall familiar incidents, old associations and family connections were futile. In addressing Hess, Haushofer always used the familiar form *Du*.

On the way back to Haushofer's lodgings, I directed the chauffeur to drive through the ruined heart of Nürnberg where Haushofer could see the devastation brought about by the bombing. He was constantly exclaiming, "Ach, Gott! What tragedy." The tour ended in a square which was once one of the most noble architectural spots in Central Europe, the open space surrounded by churches, museums, public buildings and some of the finest examples of late Renaissance craftsmanship. It is now one of the most chaotic accumulations of rubble, devastation and ruins to be seen any place in Germany. But in the center of the square, before the ruins of St. Egidien's Church, there is an equestrian statue of heroic size commemorating Wilhelm I, the founder of the German empire. By one of those strange paradoxes that sometimes occur during bombardments, this statue is intact and, though surrounded by rubble 10 feet deep at its base, the horseman is silhouetted against the sky and gazes imperiously over the wreckage of the Nazi empire.

Haushofer stared at it for a long time without a syllable of comment. There was no necessity for me to embellish the symbolism.



SON ALBRECHT, Nazi diplomat and close friend of Rudolf Hess (in wall picture), was assassinated in a Berlin street for plotting against Hitler.

On the following day, Oct. 10, 1945, I motored Haushofer back to his home in southern Bavaria and restored him to his wife and family. I informed him that I would return in about three weeks for the personal deposition I had asked him to prepare. I passed by Hartschimmelhof on my way back from Austria and Italy and secured the statement, "Defense of German Geopolitics," which was signed in my presence in his study and dated Nov. 2, 1945.

This last will and testament of German geopolitics is an intensely human recital of the historical and domestic circumstances in which the movement originated. "It was born of necessity," Haushofer confesses. "It will also show the signs of his [Haushofer's] late entrance on a scientific profession." The document asserts that Hitler and his associates grossly distorted the valid geographical parts of Haushofer's doctrines and twisted them to fanatical ends. "In the Third Reich the party in power lacked any official organ receptive to or understanding of the doctrines of geopolitics. Therefore they only selected and wrongly interpreted catchwords which they did not comprehend. Only Rudolf Hess . . . and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, von Neurath, had a certain understanding of geopolitics — without being able to apply it successfully." With a measure of indignation Haushofer denies any part in the composition of *Mein Kampf* and asserts that he never saw the text until the volume was in print. Even then he refused to review it in his magazine, regarding the book as a propaganda tract. "I never saw Hitler alone. The last time I saw him, on Nov. 8, 1938, was in the presence of witnesses and I then had a sharp disagreement with him. From then on I was in disgrace." He confesses to many errors but insists that he never advocated the violence and unilateral policy of Hitler. The apology ends with a plea for cooperation among the scholars of the world based on international understanding and respect for human rights.

During November and December other duties in connection with a brief on the Nazi persecution of Christianity made it impractical to visit Haushofer again in southern Bavaria. But several

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



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HAUSHOFER CONTINUED

letters arrived from him, dealing with the future of Germany under the occupation, with the proposed land reform in the American zone and with certain problems concerning his personal status under the de-Nazification law. His desire to cooperate and redeem the promise made at Nürnberg seemed to be sincere and authentic. He furnished many valuable leads, particularly in respect to the missing documents and diaries of his son Albrecht, who had lost his life because of the efforts he made to negotiate peace.

A letter dated Nov. 23, in English, from Martha Haushofer, his wife, brought the news that Haushofer had suffered a serious stroke. But evidently his mental powers slowly returned. His letter of Feb. 7, 1946, is filled with indignation at the news that Rudolph Hess had stood up in open court at Nürnberg and admitted that his amnesia had been a trick, a simulated condition "for strategic reasons." In the same letter, he returned with new insistence to the importance of finding those hidden documents of his son Albrecht. Certain secret papers of Hitler had been deciphered at Nürnberg, setting forth the nature and circumstances of Albrecht's peace overtures.

"This clearly shows," wrote Haushofer, "that our son became the victim of his honorable endeavors to put an end to the struggle as early as 1941, and he probably, yes, certainly, lost his life as a result of what he attempted to do at that time." Spurred by what Haushofer had told me, I pressed the search for the son's hidden documents during the winter months. In March six dossiers were unearthed.

A skilled geopolitician in his own right, Albrecht Haushofer held the chair of political geography at the University of Berlin and conducted a seminar on geopolitics which functioned as a training school for members of the Nazi diplomatic service. We find him in the Far East in 1937 dealing with high officials of the Japanese government under the guise, of course, of a scholar promoting cultural relations; his reports to Hitler, Hess, von Ribbentrop, as well as to officials of the army and the navy, are replete with shrewd comments on political, economic and military trends. One, entitled *Personalities*, is a collection of character sketches of leading figures in the public life of Japan.

Albrecht's close association with Nazi foreign policy makers evidently underwent a complete and final transformation in 1941, the year of Germany's attack on Russia. It would appear that Hitler's eastern policy definitely convinced him that something drastic would have to be done if Germany were to be saved from disaster. With the approval of Hess he directed tentative peace proposals to the British, meeting a Swiss go-between at Geneva on April 28, 1941. Shortly afterward, on May 10, Hess made his flight to England, where he was imprisoned. Albrecht Haushofer then passed through the progressive stages of political reprobation, demotion from his position of trust in the Foreign Office, flight from Berlin, the status of a fugitive, arrest and imprisonment. On the very eve of the fall of the Nazi capital he was spirited out of the Moabit Prison and murdered in the street.

"He set the demon free. . . ."

DURING his imprisonment he had time to compose 80 sonnets which have been preserved in a collection entitled *Sonnets from Moabit*. In them he pours out his disillusionment and remorse. Sonnet 39, entitled *Guilt*, makes confession of his grievous sin in having waited too long before raising his voice in warning. "I should have seen my duty sooner and should have dared with louder voice to name as evil the thing my judgment knew as evil but held too long unspoken. . . ."

But it is in sonnets 24 and 38 that one reaches the core of the tragedy that befell the Haushofers, father and son. The former, called *Acheron*, is an indictment drawn against the leader of geopolitics: "My father was still blinded by his dream of power." The latter, entitled *The Father*, recalls an ancient legend of the East: The spirits of unholy power were imprisoned, sealed deep in the darkness of the sea by the beneficent hand of God, until once in a thousand years it chanced that a fisherman had it in his choice to unloose the imprisoned fiend—unless straightway he cast what he discovered back into the sea. "For my father was that chance ordained. It once lay in the power of his will to thrust the demon back into his prison. But my father broke the seal. He sensed not the breath of evil. He set the demon free to roam throughout the world."

In February 1946 I attempted to visit the failing geopolitician. My GI driver and I got within five miles of Haushofer's home above Lake Ammer See when our car bogged down in snowdrifts. When this happened three times, I reluctantly surrendered to the ele-

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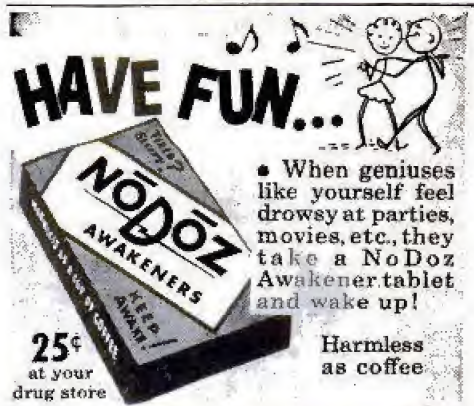
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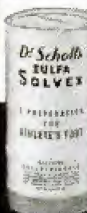
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ments and turned back to Munich. I waited for the weather to abate, but death came sooner than the thaws of spring.

On March 14 the news reached me in Nürnberg that Haushofer and his wife had committed suicide on the previous Sunday. Proceeding immediately to Hartschimmelhof and seated that evening with Haushofer's only surviving son, Heinz, in the dead man's library, with all the paraphernalia of his thwarted scholarship strewn around us, I heard an amazing recital.

The written statement delivered to me by Heinz Haushofer for the records at Nürnberg declares that the idea of suicide had been constantly present in his father's thoughts for several years, indeed from 1941.

"Even at that date, my father clearly foresaw the approaching catastrophe of the Hitler regime. . . . Daily in his talks with me the thought of suicide intruded itself. . . . I, as a son, was always opposed to these utterances of my father and often, in discussions which lasted for hours I fought with him on the question whether suicide—from the ethical point of view—is permissible or not. Opposing the Christian point of view which I represented, he claimed for himself the right of the Stoic to be allowed to end his life after having fulfilled his duties. . . . The initiative for this joint suicide of my parents, without doubt, originated with my father; since my parents had lived together for 50 years in unparalleled faithfulness, my mother decided to go with him, at the same time, in a *matrimonium mortis*, as the Romans expressed it. . . ."

Heinz also informed me of his father's last request: that no marker, tombstone or other form of identification should ever be put on his grave.

The execution of the suicide pact was marked by a meticulous attention to details. On Monday morning, March 11, the son awaited his mother downstairs, as a journey had been arranged to the nearby town of Weilheim. As neither of his parents appeared, Heinz investigated and found their beds had not been slept in; a letter of farewell was pinned to the pillow slip, together with a neatly drawn diagram showing where the bodies would be found. It appears that the pair, who were shortly to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their marriage, had quietly slipped out of the house sometime late Sunday night when the household had retired and made their way in darkness down a dirt road for nearly half a mile to the chosen spot.

It was a secluded hollow on the estate through which flowed a small stream approximately four feet wide. A tree grew on the bank, one stout limb projecting over the water. This locality presumably had been carefully selected, as Heinz found a poem describing that particular tree in his father's sketchbook, together with an illustration of it drawn by his own skilled hand.

When found the next morning, Martha Haushofer's body was hanging by the neck from the tree. They had both taken arsenic as well, but Haushofer had evidently been prevented by his bodily weakness from making assurance doubly sure after taking the poison. His body lay sprawled on the ground, his feet toward the creek and his hands clutching the Bavarian soil which he so passionately loved and often described in his writings on *Lebensraum*. The lantern with the extinguished candle which had lighted them through the darkness lay beside them. Traversing their route step by step a few days after the double suicide—it was the Ides of March—and attempting to reconstruct the scene as it was played out on that windy night on one of the loneliest hillsides in Bavaria, I could only liken it to some final act of a Greek tragedy.



HAUSHOFER'S HOME in Bavaria, near Munich, was once a geopolitical mecca. It was here that Haushofer and his wife committed suicide last spring.



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